

# CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

## ***Sentencing Structure, Policy & Practices Committee Meeting***

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

2:30-3:30 p.m.

*Bridgeport Superior Court, Courtroom 3C  
1061 Main Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut*

***Members In Attendance:*** Hon. Robert Devlin (Chair), Hon. Patrick Carroll, Mark Palmer, Steve Spellman (Representing Reuben Bradford), Susan Storey, Hon. Gary White

***Also Participating:*** Jason DePatie

## **MINUTES**

### **I. MEETING CONVENED**

Judge Devlin called the meeting to order at approximately 2:30 p.m.

### **II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Committee members introduced themselves and identified their affiliations.

### **III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 20, 2011**

Upon a duly made and seconded motion, the minutes were approved by a **unanimous voice vote**.

### **IV. THE REQUIRED USE OF SEPECIAL PAROLE AS A COMPONENT OF THE SENTENCE FOR CERTAIN SEX OFFENSES – IS IT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE?**

The committee discussed the use of special parole in sentences involving sex offenses outlined in General Statutes §53a-70(b)(3). The unique challenges sex offenses place on the corrections system and the differences between special parole, regular parole and probation were discussed in detail. A key point in the discussion was that two years ago the legislature greatly increased the period of probation for certain sex offenses. This policy change was largely the result of recidivism data that showed that people who are convicted of sex offenses rarely recidivate while under supervision for extended periods of time. Committee members commented that judges tend to only use special parole when required and usually prefer to see people back in court to evaluate their behavior. Special parole differs from regular parole in that violators are immediately returned to prison without a revocation hearing. Members were concerned that requiring a sentence to “include a term of imprisonment and special parole that together constitute a sentence of at least ten years” in General Statutes §53a-70(b)(3) limits the use of probation in these types of cases. Probation can be as long as 35 years and in some instances it is better for the accused and

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public safety to structure a sentence with less prison time and a long period of probation. Committee members discussed changes that would allow judges more discretion when using special parole in these types of cases.

## **V. FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

The use of mandatory minimum sentences and creating an offense classification system for the sex offender registry were identified as possible topics for future discussion.

## **VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was introduced.

## **VII. MEETING ADJOURNED**

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.